

lane divided highways in West Virginia; a few dollars compared with the billions of dollars that go for airports, go for mass transit and other modes of transportation elsewhere.

So she is experiencing new economic growth. Travel our highways now, view the scenery now, experience the hospitality now, see the historic places, stand on the tops of those mountains and view the creative works of an omnipotent God. Look at her sunrises, pause at her tranquil sunsets and view the land where the early pioneers crossed the Alleghenies with a Bible in one hand and a rifle in the other, carrying a bag of seeds.

They used the forests, dredged the rivers, and built a great State—a great State—a State that was born during the struggle between the States, the war between the States, the war among the States.

So she is experiencing new economic growth and prosperity as a result of new roads, technology, and forward-looking leadership. In fact, West Virginia boasts four cities in the top 200 of Money magazine's 1997 list of the best places in America to live. And there are many more than four cities there and towns and rural communities that I would categorize as the best places in America to live.

So today I say to all of those who have never tasted our glorious country cooking or danced at our traditional mountain festivals to tunes that are played by mountain musicians, never skied our shimmering slopes or paddled our wild white water, never heard the rich notes of our mountain music or gazed at our phenomenal sunsets, come to West Virginia. We will show you the way.

Happy birthday. Happy birthday, West Virginia. May you grow, and may your people never, never change.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. I want to commend the able Senator from West Virginia on his devotion and dedication to his State. He has just paid a wonderful eulogy to that State and the people of that State. I am sure the people of the United States are very proud of West Virginia and the people of West Virginia and the able Senator who represents them here in the Senate.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I thank my friend, my senior colleague, for his gracious and kind remarks concerning my State and my people.

CHEMICAL WARFARE DEFENSE DOCTRINE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, one year ago tomorrow, on June 21, 1996, in a hastily called press conference, the Department of Defense revealed that United States troops may have been exposed to Iraqi chemical nerve and mustard agents as a result of the post-war demolition of an Iraqi ammunition

storage depot at Kamisiyah, Iraq. By September 1996, the DOD estimate of the number of soldiers who may have been exposed had climbed to just over 20,000, and the DOD announced that studies were still under way that could push that number even higher. This announcement raised new fears that Iraqi chemical warfare agents may have played a role in causing the illness among United States and coalition veterans of the Persian gulf war that has come to be called gulf war syndrome, and it exposed flaws in the manner in which the Department of Defense tracked the locations and medical histories of units and individual troops. The Department of Defense and the Presidential Advisory Committee on gulf war illnesses have subsequently attempted to address this and many other possible causes of gulf war syndrome, as have a number of congressional committees. There is still considerable uncertainty and controversy surrounding this issue.

As a result of that announcement, I offered an amendment to the Fiscal Year 1997 Department of Defense authorization bill to provide \$10 million for independent scientific research into the possible relationship between chemical agent exposure, particularly to low levels of chemical agent exposure, and gulf war syndrome. My amendment was adopted without debate by the Senate and supported through the conference with the House, and I thank my colleagues for sharing in my concern that our veterans be provided with the independent medical research on this subject that had not previously existed. I am eager, as I know our sick veterans and their families are also, to learn the results of these studies.

But, Mr. President, although efforts to improve medical records management techniques in order to better understand and treat future post-war illnesses among United States troops—efforts already undertaken by the Department of Defense—are a step in the right direction, I believe that the most effective course of action is to prevent the exposures from occurring. We must not settle for just closing the barn door after the horse has bolted. We must find out why the door failed to contain the horse, and fix it. In that regard, the effectiveness of current doctrine and technology is questionable. It is not certain that our chemical detectors will provide a sufficient warning for low levels of chemical agent, and it is not certain that our military doctrine and procedures are adequate to fully protect our troops in a scenario that is not immediately life-threatening. Nor is it certain that the military anticipates the synergistic effects of different factors, such as the administration of vaccines and anti-chemical warfare agent drugs, in combination with the use of pesticides or exposure to other battlefield effluents, including chemical and biological agents.

I am concerned that United States military doctrine has not changed to

reflect these lessons learned from the gulf war experience and its aftermath. My concern is, I know, shared by many of my colleagues, who over the years have pursued these issues in hearings. Indeed, even the Special Assistant for gulf war illnesses at the Department of Defense has admitted in testimony before Congress that "We [DOD] need to learn from our Gulf experience and make the necessary changes in policies, doctrine, and technology."

I am pleased, therefore, that two of my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, Senator LEVIN and Senator GLENN, have joined me in requesting that the General Accounting Office [GAO] initiate an evaluation of this very issue. Both of these very able Senators have, over the last several years, questioned the ability of our military to fight and win on a chemical battlefield. We have asked the GAO to address the adequacy of current policies, procedures, and technologies to first adequately defend United States military forces against single, repeated, or sustained exposure to low levels of chemical warfare agent, and to second identify, prepare for, and defend against the possible adverse effects of chemical warfare agent exposure in combination with other compounds commonly found in the battlefield, including pesticides, oil and diesel exhaust, biological warfare agents, low level radiation, medically administered vaccines, and other occupational hazards.

It is my hope that this study will lay the foundation upon which we might make effective and targeted adjustments in next year's Department of Defense authorization bill that will give our soldiers the ability and confidence to fight and win on a chemically contaminated battlefield.

IN MEMORY OF BILLY N. STEPHENS

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, on Sunday, May 18, a soldier was laid to rest in a small Kentucky community along the banks of the Ohio River. But this wasn't to be any small affair. Billy Stephens had served his country and community with distinction and he would be honored for those contributions by a 17-man team from Ft. Knox.

Once the rifles were fired, the bugle sounded taps, and the flag from the casket was presented to his widow, those present couldn't help but feel the enormity of his life. A son of Hawesville in Hancock County, if you met Billy Stephens on the street, you might not suspect him of greatness.

But it is because of him and others like him, that you and I enjoy freedom today.

In 1940, he joined the Army and served for the duration of the war. Before the war ended, he would participate in seven campaigns and earn seven battle stars. In addition to the EAME theater with seven Bronze Stars, his military decorations included the